



DNRENEWS

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Fire Incident Report

Meridian Boundary Fire

May 21, 2010

7:00 a.m.

Incident Update 4

Media and Public Information Contact: DNRE Fire PIO 989-348-6371, ext. 7449
DNRE Media Chief 517-335-3014

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Current Status:

Location: South Branch Township, Crawford County

Size: Approximately 8,500 acres

Percent contained: **80 percent as of 6:00 p.m. May 20, 2010**

Injuries/Deaths: None

Evacuation Status: Evacuation order on west side is still in effect.

The DNRE announced today that M-18 and the area east of M-18 will be reopened Friday, May 21, at 1:00 p.m. We ask that you drive safely with your lights on and do not stop within the blackened areas. Smoke, heavy equipment, potholes of heat, and trees that have burned but remain standing (snags) are in the area and present hazards for citizens who get out of their cars.

EAST OF M-18

The evacuated area east of M-18 will be re-opened at 9:00 a.m. to RESIDENTS ONLY for an opportunity to assess their property and secure their belongings.

Blockades will continue to be staffed at M-18 and Old 144. Landowners must show identification with proof of residence or a tax bill indicating that they own property in the area before entry. Only residents will be permitted into this area from 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m., when the area will be opened to others.

Residents who remain in the area are asked to stay on their property and leave their outside lights on so firefighters and enforcement officers are aware that they are remaining in the area.

WEST OF M-18

The evacuated area west of M-18 will remain closed until we can ensure firelines hold through an expected wind event this afternoon. Residents will be allowed access into the blockaded area with

identification and an escort from 6:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. to secure property and will be asked to leave for the evening.

Structures Destroyed/Damaged: 12 residences destroyed; 2 residences damaged; 39 out-buildings destroyed or damaged.

Resources committed to incident:

Incident Commander: Paul Gaberdiel

Incident Command Center: DNRE Grayling Field Office

Total Personnel on Fire: 108 from DNRE, US Forest Service, and local volunteer fire departments.

Support from Crawford County Emergency Management Center, Crawford County Sheriff, and Michigan State Police.

Weather expected for Friday May 21: Mostly sunny until noon, then mostly cloudy in the afternoon. High temperature of 77 degrees. Minimum relative humidity between 39% and 44%. Winds will be from the southeast building to 11-15 mph by the afternoon with gusts to 25 mph. Slight chance of light showers in the later afternoon/evening.

Fire History:

Today on the Meridian Fire, crews continue to work on securing the line around the perimeter of the fire. Crews also started mop up on the hot spots around the perimeter. Firefighters continue to experience minor problems along the southern and western edges, but crews have been able to maintain the perimeter. Efforts are very focused on containment. Smokes and smoldering stumps were extinguished in yards and near homes.

The fire was first spotted by a DNRE fixed wing aircraft at approximately 1:30 p.m. May 18. The point of origin has been determined and is being investigated. The cause was burning of brush. Burn permits were being issued for this county on May 18.

Total estimated acreage was decreased today due to better perimeter GPS data from firefighters. The fire is now approximately 80% contained.

On Thursday the Incident commander removed some of the road closures and opened up the area east of Chase Bridge Road and south of Pioneer Road so those residents could return home.

The fire is on state and federal forest land that is mostly jackpine, but it has entered a swampy area and a hardwoods area, which helped slow the fire's progress considerably.

Announcements/ Additional Information:

Visitors to the Grayling area should be mindful that there will continue to be large equipment in the fire and surrounding areas. Please drive safe and with lights on for better visibility.

Maps/Pictures:

Maps, photos and more information can be found at the DNRE website at www.michigan.gov/dnre.

Questions regarding the Range 9 Fire in Kalkaska County can be directed to Major Dawn Dancer of the Dept of Military and Veterans Affairs at 517-481-8140.

This report will be updated again on Saturday, May 22' 2010 mid morning.